

the property to the church. The government has since reversed itself and announced plans to go forward with the seizure. I fear the seizure will trigger violence or bloodshed. Unarmed clergy and lay persons holding vigil within the compound could be in harm's way.

The action by the government in Khartoum makes a mockery of its claims to respect religious freedom and human rights, and demonstrates, yet again, its intentions to continue to persecute Christians and Muslims who do not agree with the regime's particular brand of Islam.

The United States government has been active in opposing this kind of human rights abuse in Sudan, and I ask our State Department to continue to shine a spotlight on this kind of human rights violation. In addition, I call upon our allies and friends in the world community to intervene with the government of Sudan to stop these human rights abuses.

In particular, I challenge the governments of Canada and France, whose companies are helping to develop Sudan's oil reserves, to speak up boldly in defense of religious freedom and against these unjustified actions by the government of Sudan. Concrete actions by these governments to denounce these human rights violations may make the difference between freedom and oppression for these people, and possibly between life and death. The United States and the entire international community must not stand by in the face of persecution.

HATE CRIMES

SPEECH OF

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 13, 1999

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise this evening to join my colleagues in calling on the Republican Leadership to bring hate crimes legislation to the floor of this House.

For too long, this House has failed to act in the face of the growing list of victims who have fallen to the culture of hatred that seems to be on the rise in this country. We have seen synagogues burned to the ground. We have seen James Byrd dragged to his death down a dusty road in Texas. And one year ago yesterday, we lost Matthew Shepard after he was beaten and left for dead on a cold night in Laramie, WY. And there have been too many stories, some that the Nation has not yet heard, of young men and women visited by untimely and violent deaths.

In Texas City, TX, Aaron Morris and Kevin Tryals were shot to death, one of their bodies left in a burning car, simply because they were gay.

In Ft. Lauderdale, CA, Jody-Gaye Bailey was shot in the head by a self-proclaimed skinhead. Minutes before the shooting, her assailant ranted about his desire to kill her just because she was black.

In Sylacauga, AL, Billy Jack Gaither was beaten to death with an ax handle, his body set afire on a pile of burning tires, because he was gay.

In Kenosha, WI, two African-American teens were intentionally run down while walking on the sidewalk. Eight years earlier, their assailant had deliberately rammed a van carrying five African-American men.

In northern California, three synagogues were burned to the ground by two brothers who are also suspected of gunning down two gay men in Redding, CA.

Even as violent crime continues to decline in America, the awful list of hate crime victims continues to grow. According to the FBI, there were nearly 8,000 hate crimes committed in 1995 alone. From attacks on synagogues in northern California early this summer to the tear gassing of a gay pride parade in San Diego this past August, we have seen assault after assault on individuals because of their religion, their race, or their sexual orientation.

We are all appalled by these violent, hateful crimes. But how many more of our citizens have to fall to the epidemic of hate crime in this country before this House is compelled to act? We passed resolutions condemning hatred and racism. We came to the floor of this House and sent out thoughts and prayers to the families of the victims. We spoke of the loss of values in America. But a Nation's values must also be reflected in its laws. We should not just speak of our outrage. We should pass this legislation and help put a stop to acts of hatred.

Currently, the law only allows the prosecution of a hate crime if it is committed while the victim is exercising a federally protected right, such as voting or attending school. This law was written to address the challenge of segregationists attempting to prevent minorities from voting or going to school, it does not meet the challenge of today's hate groups that seek to terrorize entire communities with their violent acts. By passing the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, we empower federal prosecutors to assist local law enforcement in finding and punishing those who commit hate crimes based on a person's race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

Hate crimes are not just assaults on individual victims, they are an assault on entire communities. The murder of one gay man is about attacking the entire gay community. Burning down a synagogue is about striking fear into the hearts of Jews everywhere. Let's call hate crimes what they really are—terrorism. When the supporters of hatred and division turn their thoughts into hateful acts, they need to know that we will come after them with full force of law and that they will pay for their crimes.

I want to thank my colleagues who came to the floor this evening to keep this issue on the national agenda. We will continue to fight for passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act and we will not stop until it is the law of the land. Let us do this in memory of the victims of hate crimes. And let's do it to ensure that we are not here this time next year, remembering the life of Matthew Shepard and mourning the loss of another 8,000 victims of hate crimes.

SENATE SHOULD PASS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PROTECTION ACT

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently, this House passed H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act. The bill is currently in committee in the Senate and I would like to take this opportunity to urge our colleagues in the other house to pass this bill as soon as possible.

America is a secular democracy, a country where the religious rights of every citizen are protected by the Constitution. In many other countries, including some that call themselves secular and democratic, people do not enjoy these freedoms. We must do whatever we can to protect religious freedom for every American.

The Sikh religion requires Sikhs to have five symbols known as the "five Ks." The five Ks are unshorn hair (Kes), a comb (Kanga), a bracelet (Kara), a kind of shorts (Kachha), and a ceremonial sword (Kirpan). These are required by the religion.

In a recent incident in Mentor, Ohio, outside Cleveland, a 69-year-old Sikh named Gurbachan Singh Bhatia was involved in a minor traffic accident. When the police arrived at the scene, a policeman saw Mr. Bhatia's kirpan (ceremonial sword). He was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. The case is scheduled to be heard in December. In a case in Cincinnati involving similar circumstances, the judge, the Honorable Mark Painter wrote, "To be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon."

Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, has been working to get the Religious Liberty Protection Act to protect the rights of Mr. Bhatia and all religious people of all faiths in America. No person should be harassed for his religious faith. He has written to Senator HATCH, who chairs the Judiciary Committee over there, and all members of the committee in support of this bill.

I call on the local authorities in Mentor to drop all charges against Mr. Bhatia and I also call on my colleagues over in the Senate to pass H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act.

I submit Dr. Aulakh's letter to Senator HATCH into the RECORD for the information of my colleagues.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, October 7, 1999.

Hon. ORRIN HATCH,
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee,
Washington, DC.

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO EXPEDITE PASSAGE OF
H.R. 1691 TO PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

DEAR SENATOR HATCH: On behalf of over 500,000 Sikhs, I am writing to you in support of H.R. 1691, the Religious Liberty Protection Act.

The Council of Khalistan represents the interests of the Sikh Nation in this country and worldwide. It was constituted by the Panthic Committee to represent the Sikh struggle for freedom. We have worked for the last 12 years in pursuit of this objective.

It is vitally important that the Religious Liberty Protection Act be reported out of committee and passed as soon as possible.

Charan Singh Kalsi of New Jersey was fired by the New York Transit Authority. The Transit Authority tried to force him to wear a hard hat instead of his turban, which he is required to wear as a symbol of his Sikh religion.

When a Sikh is baptized, he or she is required to have five symbols called the five Ks. They are unshorn hair (Kes), a comb (Kanga), a bracelet (Kara), a kind of shorts (Kachha), and a ceremonial sword (Kirpan). These are required by the religion.

Recently in Mentor, Ohio, Gurbachan Singh Bhatia, a 69-year-old Sikh, was involved in a minor traffic accident. The police were called to the scene of the accident. When the policeman saw Mr. Bhatia's kirpan (ceremonial sword), he was arrested for carrying a concealed weapon. He is currently scheduled to go to trial in December. In a similar case in Cincinnati, Judge Mark Painter wrote, "To be a Sikh is to wear a kirpan—it is that simple. It is a religious symbol and in no way a weapon."

Mr. Bhatia and Mr. Kalsi are exercising their freedom of religion. The U.S. Constitution guarantees religious freedom to everyone. The Religious Liberty Protection Act will protect individuals like Gurbachan Singh Bhatia and Charan Singh Kalsi from being prosecuted and denied jobs for exercising their religious freedom. That is why this bill is so important.

On behalf of the Sikhs in America, I urge you to report the Religious Liberty Protection Act out so that it can be passed and become law as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

DR. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President, Council of Khalistan.

HONORING JUDGE MYRON DONOVAN CROCKER

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judge Myron Donovan Crocker for his outstanding contributions to the community.

As long as there has been an Eastern District of California, there has been a Judge Myron Donovan Crocker. Judge Crocker was born in Pasadena on September 4, 1915 and was raised in Fresno. He attended Fresno schools and graduated from Fresno High School in 1933 and Fresno State College in 1937. He received his law degree from the University of California, Boalt Hall, in May of 1940. His first job was with the FBI in New York, first in Albany and then in New York City during World War II handling counter-espionage matters. Judge Crocker and his wife Elaine were married in New York while he was stationed there.

After the war ended, the FBI granted Crocker's request for a transfer closer to home and he was assigned to Los Angeles. In 1946, he entered private practice in Chowchilla and worked as Deputy District Attorney for Madera County. In 1951, he became Judge of the Chowchilla Justice Court, while continuing his private practice. He was appointed Superior

Court Judge of Madera County in 1958, and remained there for only 1 year before his appointment to the Federal Bench.

Upon Judge Crocker's appointment to the Federal Bench on September 21, 1959, he spent most of his time in Los Angeles and San Diego. At that time, the Federal court in Fresno was part of the Southern District of California. With redistricting in September, 1966, Judge Crocker became the Chief Judge of the Eastern District of California, and was the sole Federal judge in the Fresno district. His duties as Chief Judge included overseeing the completion of the Federal Courthouse in Fresno. Judge Crocker stepped down as Chief Judge in June 1967.

Although the caseload in Fresno grew quickly after redistricting, Judge Crocker still traveled frequently to sit on cases throughout the United States, including being in Washington, D.C. in 1968 when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Judge Crocker remained the sole Federal judge in Fresno until 1979, when an additional judgeship was approved and Judge Edward D. Price was appointed. In 1981, Judge Crocker took Senior status and Judge Robert E. Coyle was appointed in his place. As a senior judge, Judge Crocker has continued to take cases and has made himself available for high profile cases outside his district.

Judge Crocker is held in highest esteem by his peers, staff and the legal community for his legal ability, demeanor, kindness, and fairness. As a colleague stated, "He is held in universal affectionate esteem."

Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Judge Myron Donovan Crocker for his service to Fresno and the Eastern District of California on his 40th anniversary of service. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Judge Crocker many more years of continued success and happiness.

RECOGNIZING MARPLE NEWTOWN CARING COALITION

HON. CURT WELDON

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct honor to stand before you today to recognize the tireless and exemplary efforts of the Marple Newtown Caring Coalition. This organization brings together schools and the community as partners in order to work side-by-side for substance abuse prevention education.

During the week of October 23–27, the Marple Newtown Caring Coalition alongside numerous schools and community programs across the country will be participating in Red Ribbon Week. The goal behind Red Ribbon Week is to educate students of all ages from kindergarten through high school on the grave dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. The Red Ribbon Campaign first originated in 1985 after the tragic death of Special Agent Enrique Camarena of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in the battle against drugs. Red Ribbons are worn by school students as a symbol of intolerance against drug use and a commitment to a drug-free lifestyle.

On October 25th, Marple Newtown Caring Coalition will proudly host the Red Ribbon Week Celebration in my Congressional District. The presentation will bring representatives from over 10 elementary and high schools together to promote substance abuse prevention. This gathering of students of all ages and different schools works to facilitate a bond between students and adults to achieve better communications for safe schools and communities.

I applaud Marple Newtown Caring Coalition's endeavors to educate the entire community on the necessity of drug prevention education not only for the future of our community, but also for the future of our children. The Coalition stands behind a proactive approach by bringing parents, teachers, students, law enforcement officers and community leaders together to strive toward a healthy, drug-free atmosphere in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I feel it is imperative we support and encourage students and adults working together to end the destruction of drug abuse and move towards a reality dominated by drug-free and alcohol-free students. I would like to ask my colleagues to support their local Red Ribbon weeks at schools within their districts. With organizations like the Marple Newtown Caring Coalition and our local schools around the nation, we can strike a serious blow in the fight against drugs.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF MATTHEW SHEPARD

HON. CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 14, 1999

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, the tragic death of Matthew Shepard should have marked a turning point * * * but tragically it didn't.

The hatred and the violence against gays and lesbians still exists today. These days it seems that anyone, whether they're gay or merely perceived to be, runs the risk of becoming the victim of a hate crime. That is why we must expand federal hate crime laws to include offenses based on sexual orientation.

Nationwide, scores of beatings and bashings of gays and lesbians have occurred, regularly reported by the gay press, but often ignored by the mass media.

Some of you probably haven't heard of a California gay couple who was murdered in their home this summer or the shooting of a gay man in Michigan earlier this year.

In a recent speech, Matthew's mom, Judy Shepard said: "For all who ask what they can do for Matthew and other victims, my answer is to educate and bring understanding where you see hate and ignorance, bring light where you see darkness, bring freedom where there is fear and begin to heal."

That is the message we should take to heart on this anniversary of Matthew Shepard's murder.